

Lesson Plan – Explorers (Grade 3)

Activities are teacher led and can be adjusted according to grade level and understanding. This lesson uses national parks to introduce students to different geographical areas and their representative plants and animals. Third graders can fill out their own worksheets with some direction as to where to locate information in the park brochure (map and guide).

1. Set the stage

Read the *National Parks Background Information* and discuss what a national park is. Tell your students that today we are going to learn about some different national parks and then we will find out about our own national park here in Los Angeles.

2. Gather Information

Divide students into three or four groups. Each group will work on one national park. Choose parks in the same state or area of the United States that have geographical contrast, i.e. mountain, desert, seashore. Use the *Worksheet* to guide the students in finding information about their park. Provide stickers for the US National Park map. (Students may need some help in locating their park on the map prior to giving their report.)

3. Report

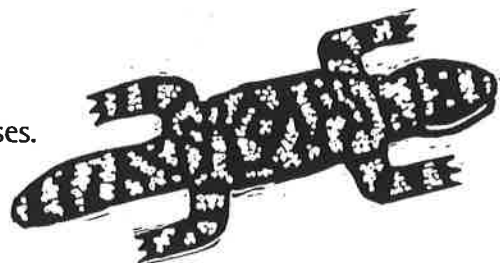
Groups come back together to present their reports under your direction. Ask a student from each group to identify the name of their park and use a sticker to mark the location of the park on the US Map. Ask each group to report on the information they have discovered about their national park, using the questions from the *Worksheet* as cues.

4. Wrap up

Ask who would like to work at a national park? What would they do? Ask who has visited a national park? Would they want to visit the national park they reported on? Pass out copies of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area brochure and invite students to visit this national park here in Los Angeles with their families.

5. Evaluate

Consider detail and length of oral responses.

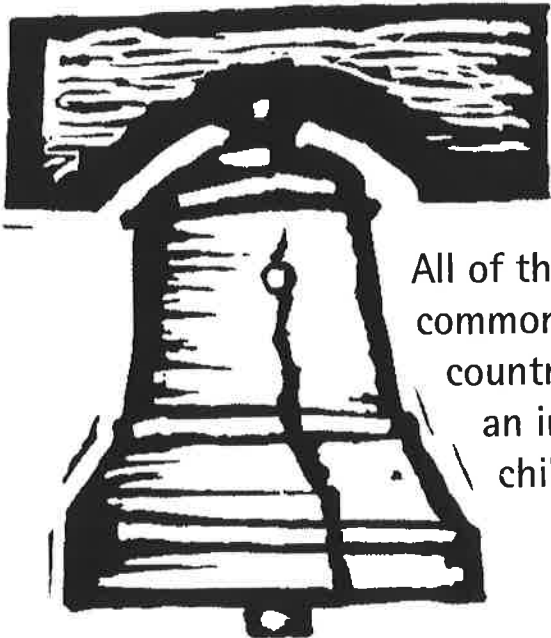




National Parks Background Information

National parks belong to you — and to me. They belong to all of us. Each national park protects something special. These places have been set aside because they are important for people to know about. Some parks have special natural features, like the deep lake at Crater Lake National Park. Some parks have special plants, like the tall trees at Redwood National Park. Some parks have hot springs and geysers like Yellowstone National Park. In 1872, Yellowstone was the first area to be set aside for the enjoyment of the people of the United States and to protect the plants and animals living there.

The National Park Service was created in 1916 to take care of the parks for all of us. There are now more than 378 different units that are cared for by the National Park Service. These include many areas that you might not think of as national parks, such as the Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall, Gettysburg Battlefield and the White House. These are historic sites, not natural areas like Yellowstone, but the National Park Service protects them all.



All of these very different places have one thing in common. Each represents an important example of our country's natural and cultural history. They are a *legacy*, an inheritance, that is saved for you and for your children, and all future generations of Americans.

Worksheet

1. What is the name of your national park?

Clue: Look in the black band of the brochure for that information.

It is: _____

2. What kind of national park is this? Circle the correct answer:

National Battlefield

National Historic Site

National Memorial

National Monument

National Park

National Recreation Area

National Seashore

If the answer is not there, please write it here:

3. What state is this national park in?
(Look also in the black band.) It is in:

4. Mark the location of this national park on the map of the United States. Circle what direction is it from your school:

North

South

East

West

5. Circle the season that you think would be a good time of the year to go to this national park:

Spring

Summer

Winter

Fall

6. Circle the things (activities) you or your family could do at your national park:

Hike

Camp

Learn about history

Swim

Ride horses

Ski

Go fishing



7. Does your national park have special plants or animals that live there? Circle your answer: Yes No

8. Can you state one fact the park brochure says about that plant or animal that makes it important?

9. What is historic about your park? Circle your answer.

A famous person was born there.

A famous person lived there.

A famous battle happened there.

An important event took place there.

My park is not a historic site.



*Your groups will now give reports about their national parks.
At the end of your reports, your teacher will have some questions
for your class to finish this program on national parks.*